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UNCLAS DAR ES SALAAM 001469

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KAMPALA FOR REGIONAL REFUGEE COORDINATOR; AF/E FOR BYODER

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TAGS: [PREF](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [TZ](#)

SUBJECT: REFUGEES RETURNING, ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS EXPELLED;
TANZANIA'S REFUGEE UPDATE AUGUST 2006

¶1. (U) UNHCR assisted 5,511 Burundian refugees to repatriate from August 1 to 22. This marked increase from previous months is attributed to the promotion of voluntary repatriation as well as to the season for planting and the beginning of the school year. Two returns to the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) are planned for the week of August 28 after a hold on repatriation due to the DRC elections on July 30. Future repatriation to eastern DRC may be problematic, depending on reactions to election results, but will be helped by the addition of pontoons at Kigoma pier. UNHCR signed a contract August 24 for two pontoons, funded through contributions from an appeal and the UNHCR budget for repatriation to DRC; the installation of the pontoons is expected to be completed in November. With 18 new arrivals from Burundi and 18 from the DRC, Tanzania is host to 323,000 refugees (181,200 Burundians, 136,500 Congolese, 2,700 Somalis and 2,600 others) in the Kagera, Kigoma and Tanga regions.

¶2. (U) UNHCR expressed concern to the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), home to both the Refugee and Immigration Departments, regarding the expulsion of approximately 600 Burundians. Media reports, which often confuse the terms "illegal immigrant" and "refugee" said that the group of men, women and children had been living in Tanzania villages for more than two decades. MHA confirmed that those expelled were not refugees but had been living in villages without documents authorizing their stay. UNHCR expressed concern about the human rights aspects of the expulsion, including family separation, as some of those expelled are married to Tanzanians. MHA added that the expulsions were part of a nation-wide directive and that the refugee areas were not being targeted. UNHCR did not know whether the Tanzanian authorities notified their Burundian counterparts in advance so that they could be ready to receive the Burundians. The Director of the World Food Program (WFP) noted the expulsions came at an inopportune time as good relations with authorities in both Tanzania and Burundi are needed for repatriation.

¶3. (U) Representatives from UNHCR, MHA and the Ministry of Labour will meet August 29-30 in order to review the Refugee Act. Refugee employment is a specific agenda topic.

¶4. (U) The WFP has experienced some difficulty getting food from Dar es Salaam to western Tanzania, the DRC and Burundi. In order to alleviate some of that difficulty, WFP has leased locomotives to reinforce temporarily the capacity of the Tanzania Railway Corporation.

RETZER